

REMARKS

Initially, Applicant notes that the remarks and amendments made by this paper are consistent with those presented to the Examiner by telephone.

By this paper, claims 1-14 and 22-44 have been amended and no claims have been added or canceled such that claims 1-14 and 22-45 remain pending, of which claims 1, 9, 27, and 35 are the only independent claims at issue.

The Office Action mailed April 04, 2008, considered and rejected claims 1-14 and 22-45. Claims 27-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because claims were directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claims 1, 4-6, 9-11, 27, 30-32, 35-37, and 41-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moreh et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,959,336), hereafter Moreh, and further in view of Sweet et al. (U.S. Publ. No. 2002/0031230), hereafter Sweet, and Laursen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,065,120), hereafter Laursen. Claims 2-3, 8, 12, 22, 25-26, 28-29, 34 and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moreh and further in view of Sweet, Laursen and Wood et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,609,198), hereafter Wood. Claims 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moreh and further in view of Sweet, Laursen, Wood and Leah (U.S. Patent No. 6,986,039), hereafter Leah. Claims 13 and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moreh and further in view of Sweet, Laursen, and Wood.¹

With regard to the objections to the claims, Applicant notes that the relevant claims have been amended to correct for the antecedent basis objection. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are now in proper form with respect to the noted objections. Furthermore, regarding the rejection of the computer program product claims under 35 U.S.C. 101, Applicant notes that the applicable claims have been amended to recite the computer-readable storage media rather than the computer program product stored thereon. In view of these amendments, Applicant submits that the 35 U.S.C. 101 rejections are now moot.

Applicants' claimed invention is generally directed to embodiments for managing multiple credentials in a distributed system. The embodiment of claim 1, for example recites a method for associating multiple credentials with a single user account such that the user may be authenticated with any one of the multiple credentials utilizing a service that is accessed by a user from one or more devices with varying input capabilities. In the method, the authentication service receives an authentication request from a device that includes credentials of the user with the credentials being selected by the user from among a plurality of credentials valid at the authentication system based at least partially on the

¹ Although the prior art status of the cited art is not being challenged at this time, Applicant reserves the right to challenge the prior art status of the cited art at any appropriate time, should it arise. Accordingly, any arguments and amendments made herein should not be construed as acquiescing to any prior art status of the cited art.

user's device. The credentials provided by the user are then validated, wherein the credentials are associated with a unique single user identifier of the user, a user account, and a user profile. The authentication system receives new credentials from the user, wherein the new credentials are associated with the same unique user identifier of the user, user account, and user profile. The new credentials are stored in a credential store of the authentication system such that the authentication system can authenticate the user to the service when the user provides any one of the multiple credentials associated with the user account. The authentication system provides, in response to the request, the unique user identifier and the user profile to the device.

The remaining independent claims are closely related to independent claim 1 and are allowable for the same reasons as discussed below with regard to claim 1. Claim 9 is directed to a method similar to the method of claim 1, but recited from the perspective of the user rather than the service. Claims 27 and 35 recite computer program products corresponding to the methods of claims 1 and 9 respectively, with claim 27 being slightly narrower in scope than claim 1.

The independent claims were rejected in view of Morsch, Sweet, and Laursen. Morsch discloses a federated authentication service technology. In the disclosure of Morsch, a client authenticates a subject using a protocol proxy that mediates with an authentication mechanism to obtain a name assertion that can then be used to access a server. When multiple authentication mechanisms are available, an optional agent and mechanism resolution process are used to resolve one suitable mechanism to use. The Office Action cites Sweet as demonstrating credential being associated with a single unique user identifier, a user account and a user profile. The Office Action concedes that Morsch and Sweet fail to disclose credentials being selected by the user from among a plurality of credentials based at least partially on the user's device. To compensate for this failing, the Office Action cites Laursen as purportedly compensating for the failings of Morsch and Sweet. Laursen discloses embodiments allowing a thin client to authenticate with a rendezvous associated with a user account in a server. The rendezvous can then authenticate with the server allowing the thin device to interact at the server without requiring the thin client to actually authenticate with the server.

Applicant respectfully submits that Laursen fails to compensate for the failings of Morsch and Sweet and hereby respectfully traverses this rejection. For example, contrary to the assertion of the Office Action, Applicant respectfully submits that Laursen fails to disclose a plurality of credentials based at least partially on the user's device and that a user selects from among the plurality of credentials. The presently claimed embodiments allow a user to authenticate to an authentication system using credentials that a user has selected. By allowing the user to select a credential that is most appropriate for the user's device, the present embodiments allow a user to easily authenticate to a service using the most convenient input method available to the user. For example, if the user is using a phone the credential might consist

entirely of numeric characters, while a tablet computer might have a signature type credential. While the phone user may desire numeric input for convenience, the user could alternatively choose a conventional text based credential. The choice is up to the user and the manner in which they desire to interact with the authentication system.

In contrast, the cited art of Laursen fails to teach the user selecting a credential from among a plurality of credentials based at least partially on the user's device. The Office Action asserts that column 3, lines 4-17 teaches this claim element, however, Applicant respectfully disagrees. In particular, the cited section of Laursen describes a service that allows a user to self-provision to a rendezvous service that then authenticates the user to a database. Notably absent from the cited disclosure is the user selecting what credential to use from among a plurality of credentials valid at the server. Because the cited section is a brief summary of the invention of Laursen, many of the details of the self-provisioning process are missing and the summary only suggests what is actually taking place. A better understanding of what is actually occurring is available in the detailed description of Laursen. For example, Figure 5a details the provisioning process. In the described provisioning process the device is identified using device specific information. If the device is recognized, the device is mutually authenticated with the server. As described in columns 7 and 8, the authentication process involves pre-shared keys. It will be noted that the pre-shared keys are unique to the device and are not chosen by the user. Once the session is established the user enters credential information at the rendezvous. Column 14, lines 15 and 16 describe the actual credential exchange. Notably, the user is prompted for a username and a password. The user is not choosing from a plurality of credentials as required in the claim element. Instead, the user is entering a specific credential requested by the rendezvous. In contrast with the currently claimed invention, the user has no option to select a credential based on the input of the device. Without teaching the user selecting from among a plurality of valid credentials as recited in combination with the remaining claims elements, Applicant respectfully submits that Laursen fails to compensate for the failings of Morsch and Sweet.

It will be noted that independent claim 27 contains further elements that are not found in the cited art. For example, claim 27 requires that the credentials supplied by the user correspond to a type associated with the device. For instance, a phone might only be allowed to submit numerical credentials or a voice credential. When a new credential is provided, it is further verified to comply with the type of credential associated with the device type. Furthermore, when the user successfully authenticates the same unique user identifier is returned regardless of the credentials supplied and the users device.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the other rejections to the claims are now moot and do not, therefore, need to be addressed individually at this time. It will be appreciated, however, that this should not be construed as Applicant acquiescing to any of the purported teachings or

assertions made in the last action regarding the cited art or the pending application, including any official notice. Instead, Applicant reserves the right to challenge any of the purported teachings or assertions made in the last action at any appropriate time in the future, should the need arise. Furthermore, to the extent that the Examiner has relied on any Official Notice, explicitly or implicitly, Applicant specifically requests that the Examiner provide references supporting the teachings officially noticed, as well as the required motivation or suggestion to combine the relied upon notice with the other art of record.

In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at (801) 533-9800.

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Respectfully submitted,

/Colby C. Nuttall, Reg. # 58146/

RICK D. NYDEGGER
Registration No. 28,651
COLBY C. NUTTALL
Registration No. 58,273
JOHN C. BACOCH
Registration No. 59,890
Attorneys for Applicant
Customer No. 47973

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